Womens' Cell in Indian Embassies

344. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to establish women's cells in Indian embassies abroad to tackle the offences in NRI weddings and enhance support systems for women trapped in distress situations in alien lands;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of cases of abandoned women by their NRI husbands that have been reported so far and the steps Government propose to take to provide legal, medical and financial help to such trapped and abandoned women?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, when such cases are brought to the notice of the Missions, they are extending support in all such cases, wherever necessary.

(c) The Government is taking various measures to create awareness on this issue. The measures include publishing a guidance booklet on marriage to overseas Indians and publicity through print and electronic media. The Ministry organized a National Consultation in Delhi in February 2006 and a Workshop in Chandigarh in June 2006 to address the problems relating to marriages with overseas Indian. Another workshop is being organized in collaboration with the National Commission for Women in Kerala in September, 2006.

Panchayat elections in Jharkhand

345. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which Panchayat elections have not been held in Jharkhand so far;

(b) whether Government propose to settle the issues and hold Panchayat elections early;

(c) whether Government have the intention to compensate Jharkhand people by allocating the money they should have goat *via* Panchayats,